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THE
DOCTRINE
OF THE
SACRAMENTS.

K
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Question.

WHAT meanest thou by this Word Sacrament?

Answer.

I mean an outward and visible Sign of an inward and spiritual Grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.

SUCH is the clear and decided Sense which the Church of England hath professed concerning the general Nature of the Christian Sacraments. And the appropriated Services for the Celebration of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are drawn up in perfect Conformity thereto.

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A late Attempt to spread very different Notions on the Subject hath occasioned the present Publication.

The following Tract is now separated from the Voluminous Works of its great Author for the Satisfaction of all who are in Communion with the Church of England; to show that the Sense which our Church professes hath a just Foundation in Scripture; and consequently that the Christian Sacraments have real and substantial benefits annexed to them by the appointment of God himself.

It is recommended to the pious Christian to read this Tract with his Bible in his Hand; and to examine carefully every Passage of Scripture to which it refers.

From such an Exercise he cannot fail to reap the most valuable Instruction, and advance himself in the Love and Practice, as well as in the knowledge of Godliness.

T H E
D O C T R I N E
O F T H E
S A C R A M E N T S.

IT is a peculiar excellency of our Religion, that it doth not much employ mens care, pains and time, about matters of ceremonial observance; but doth chiefly (and in a manner wholly) exercise them in works of substantial duty, agreeable to reason, perfective of man's nature, productive of true glory to God, and solid benefit to men. Its design is not to amuse our fancies with empty shews, nor to take up our endeavours in fruitless performances, but to render us truly good, and like unto God; first in interior Disposition of mind, then in exterior practice; full of hearty love and reverence to God, of tender charity and good-will toward men, of moderation and purity in the enjoyment of these things; of all true piety and virtue; whereby we may become qualified for that life of bliss which it tendereth and promiseth; for conversation in that holy Society above, to which it designeth and calleth us. Yet because Fancy is naturally a *means*, and an effectual instru-

Cyrian. Ep. 76.

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ment of Action; and because sensible objects are apt strongly to affect our minds, it hath pleased the divine Wisdom to apply them in fit measure, and to sanctify them to those good Purposes, by appointing some few solemn and significant Rites to be observed by us, being in their own nature proper and useful, and by God designed to declare his mind and gracious intents to us; to consign and convey his Grace into our Souls, to confirm our Faith in him, to raise our devotion toward him, to quicken our resolutions of obeying his will; to enable and excite us to the practice of those great Duties which he requireth of us: *Our Lord Jesus Christ, saith St. Austin, hath subjected us to this gentle yoke, and light burden; whence with Sacraments most few in number, most easy for observance, most excellent in signification he bound together the society of new people. And, The mercy of God, saith he again, would have Religion free, by the celebration of a most few, and most clear Sacraments.*

Of these there appear two (and *St. Austin* in the place cited could instance in no more) of general and principal use, instituted by our Lord himself; which because they represent to us somewhat not subject to sense, and have a secret influence upon us; because what is intended by them, is not immediately discernable by what is done, without some explication, (their significancy being not wholly grounded in the nature, but depending upon arbitrary institution, as that of words, which is of kin to them; when *St. Austin* calls a Sacrament a *visible Word*) have usually been called *Mysteries*, (that is, actions of a close and occult importance, of deeper meaning and design, than is obvious to ordinary perception) and thence are also called Sacraments, for no other reason, I conceive, than because

Augustin Ep. 118. 119.

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the ancientest Translators of the Bible into Latin, did usually render the word *Mystery*, which is a Greek word, by the Latin word *Sacrament*; whence every thing containing under it somewhat of abstruse meaning, is by ancient Writers termed a *Sacrament*. (So *Tertullian* calls all Christianity the Sacrament of Christian Religion; and *Elisha's* Ax he calls the Sacrament of Wood; and *St. Austin* speaks of the Sacrament of Bread, of Fish, of Numbers, of the Rock, &c. In short, he says of all Signs, That when they belong to divine things, they are called *Sacraments*; which shews to how small purpose the Disputes are, yea, on what small grounds the decrees are, concerning the number, general nature and efficacy of Sacraments; for where a name or form of a Sacrament is of so large, ambiguous and indeterminate signification, there can be nothing but confusion in the disputes about it.) But those which chiefly at least, and in way of eminency have obtained this name, are those *two* instituted by our Lord, *Baptism*, and the *Lord's Supper*; of which I shall in order discourse; and so of each, as very briefly to consider the occasion of their institution, the actions enjoined in them; the nature of them, or wherein their mystery doth consist, the ends for which they were intended, and the effects they produce; together with the dispositions and duties (antecedent, concomitant, and consequent) required of us in the use and practice of them. And first,

Aug. Ep. 5.

B A P T I S M.

THERE were, (as the Apostle to the *Hebrews* tells us) in sacred use among the Jews, *several kinds of Baptisms*. The Learned in their Laws and Customs teach, that they never did receive any person into their Covenant, whether that which was more strict (to which natural *Jews*, and *Profelytes of Righteousness* were tyed) or that which was more lax, with which Strangers and Profelytes of the gate did comply, without a *Baptism*. And that Priests and Levites entering into their Office, were to be sanctified by washing with water, we see plainly prescribed in their Law; likewise that all persons, who had contracted any kind of defilement, were purified by the like Ceremony, particularly Children new-born, is expressed there. Moreover, that it was in use for Persons, who were conscious to themselves of having transgressed God's Law, being in God's Name invited by some person of eminent authority (a *Prophet*, or like a Prophet, one commissioned by God) unto repentance and amendment of life, to be washed by him, in testimony of their stedfast purpose to amend; and in hope to obtain pardon from God of their past offences, and to be reinstated in his favour, appears probable by *Saint John the Baptist* his undertaking, and the success thereof. For if the manner of his proceeding had been altogether unusual and

Heb. 6. 1, 2. Heb. 9. 10. Seld. de Synedr. Exod. 29. 4. Numb. 8. 6. Levit. 15. 8, 16, 18, 27. & 22. 6. Numb. 19. 7, &c. Ezek. 16. 4. Joh. 1. 25, 33.

unknown

unknown, so many it seems would not so readily (without any stir or obstacle) have complied therewith; especially among the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, those zealous adherents to traditionary practice, who, to maintain their credit and interest with the people, were so averse from all appearance of novelty. This practice then of washing in so many Cases, and to so many purposes customary among God's people, to signify mens entering into a new state or course of life, being withal most apt and proper for his design, our *Blessed Saviour*, who never favoured needless innovations, was pleased to assume and impose upon the Disciples and followers of his Religion, accommodating it to those holy purposes, which we shall now endeavour to declare.

What the action itself enjoined is, what the manner and form thereof, is apparent by the words of our Lord's institution; *Going forth therefore*, saith he, *teach, or disciple, all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things, which I have commanded you.*

The Action is baptizing or immersing water; the Object thereof, those Persons of any Nation, whom his Ministers can by their instruction and persuasion render Disciples, that is, such as do sincerely believe the truth of his Doctrine, and seriously resolve to obey his Commandments. It is performed *in the Name*; that is, it is ministered by the authority, and bears special relation unto the Persons of the Blessed Trinity, as the chief Objects of the Faith professed, and the sole Objects of the Obedience undertaken therein; as exhibiting gracious favours unto the person baptized, and as receiving special obligations from him.

Matth. 28. 19. Mark 16. 15.

Such is the Action itself declared to be; the mystery thereof consists in its being a notable sign to represent, and an authentick Seal to ratify the collation then made of certain great benefits to us; and our undertaking correspondent duties toward God.

The Benefits which God then signifies, and, upon due terms, engageth to confer on us, are these:

I. The purgation or absolution of us from the guilt of past offences, by a free and full remission of them, (the which washing by Water, cleansing from all stains, doth most appositely represent) and consequently God's being reconciled unto us, his receiving us into a state of grace and favour, his freely justifying us, (that is, looking upon us, or treating us as just and innocent Persons, although before we stood guilty of heinous sins, and thereupon liable to grievous punishments) that these benefits are conferred in Baptism, many places of Scripture plainly shew; and the Primitive Church, with most firm and unanimous consent, did believe. *And now, said Ananias to Saint Paul, Why dost thou tarry? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.* And, *Repent,* saith Saint Peter, preaching to the Jews, *and let every one of you be baptized for the remission of sins.* And, *Christ,* saith Saint Paul again to the Ephesians, *loved his Church, and delivered himself for it, that he might sanctify it, purging it by the washing of Water; that is, he effectually in Baptism consigned to the members of his Church, that mercy and remission of sins, which he purchased and merited by his Passion.* And again, *Such,* saith he to the Corinthians, *were some of you, (that is, ye were persons guilty of heinous sins) but ye have been washed, ye have been sanctified, ye have been justified in the name of the Lord, and by the Spirit of our God; where having been washed*

Acts 22. 16. Acts 2. 38. Eph. 5. 26. 1 Cor. 6. 11.

in Christ's name, doth, in congruity with what is said in other places, denote Baptism in his name; being sanctified and justified, do express the first benefits accompanying that Baptism. And indeed, wherever a general remission of sins, or a full sanctification, or consecration, and justification of mens persons in God's sight, are mentioned; that remission of sins, that separation, or dedication unto God's Service, that reception into Grace, which are consigned in Baptism, are, I conceive, understood; there being no other season or occasion, wherein ordinarily and visibly God doth exhibit those Benefits.

It may be demanded, How Children, by reason of *their innocent age*, are capable of these Benefits; how they can be pardoned, who never had offended; how they can be justified, who never were capable of being unjust? I briefly answer, That because they come from that race, which by sin had forfeited God's favour, and had alienated itself from him; because also they have in them those seeds of pravity from which afterward certainly, life continuing, (without God's restraining Grace) will sprout forth innumerable evil actions; therefore, that God overlooking all the defects of their nature, both relative, and absolute, or personal, doth assume them into his special favour, is no small benefit to them, answerable to the remission of actual sin, and restitution from the state consequent thereon in others.

II. In Baptism, the Gift of God's Holy Spirit is conferred, qualifying us for the state into which we then come, and enabling us to perform the duties we then undertake, which otherwise we should be unable to perform; for purification of our hearts from vicious inclinations and desires; for begetting holy dispositions and affections in our Souls; for to guide

and instruct us, to sustain and strengthen us, to encourage and comfort us in all the course of Christian piety: the which effects are well also figured by water, which purifieth things both from inherent and adherent filth. That this benefit is annexed to Baptism, the Scripture also teacheth us: *Be baptized,* saith Saint Peter, *in the Name of Christ to the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.* *We being baptized in one body, are made to drink of one spirit,* saith Saint Paul: And with the *Laver of Regeneration*, Saint Paul again joineth the *renovation of the Holy Ghost*: And it is represented as an advantage of our Saviour's Baptism above that of John, that our Lord not only baptized *with water to repentance, but with the Holy Ghost, and Fire.*

Some preventing operations of the Holy Ghost (whereby God freely draweth Men to Christianity, perswading their minds to assent thereto, inspiring their hearts with resolutions to comply with it) do precede Baptism; but a more full communication thereof, due by compact, assured by promise, for the confirming and maintaining us in the firm belief and constant practice of Christianity is consequent thereon; *After ye had believed, ye were sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise,* saith Saint Paul. To signify which benefit then conferred, the ancient Christians did to Baptism annex the Chrism, or holy Unction, signifying the collation of that healing and chearing Spirit to the baptized person; that which Saint Paul may seem to respect, when he saith, *He that establisheth, or confirmeth, us with you into Christ, and who hath anointed us, is God; who also hath sealed us, and hath given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.*

III. With those gifts is connected the benefit of

Acts 2. 38. 1 Cor. 12. 13. Tit. 3. 4. Matth. 3. 15.
Ephes. 1. 14. 2 Cor. 1. 21.

Regeneration,

Regeneration, implying our entrance into a new state and course of life; being endowed with new faculties, dispositions and capacities of Souls, becoming new Creatures and new Men, as it were, *renewed after the likeness of God in righteousness and true holiness*, our being sanctified in our hearts and lives, being mortified to fleshly lusts and worldly affections, being quickened to a spiritual life and heavenly conversation: in short, becoming in relation and in disposition of mind, the children of God. This the matter and the action of Baptism doth set out; for as children new born, (for cleansing them from impurities adherent from the Womb) both among the Jews and other people, were wont to be washed; so are we in Baptism, signifying our purification from natural and worldly defilements: The mersion also in Water, and the emerſion thence, doth figure our death to the former, and receiving to a new life. Whence Baptism is by Saint Paul called *the Laver of Regeneration*; and our Lord saith, that, *If a man be not born again of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*; that is, every one becoming a Christian, is by Baptism regenerated or put into a new state of Life, getteth new dispositions of Soul, and new relations to God. *Ye are all*, saith Saint Paul, *the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*; that is, by embracing his Doctrine, and submitting to his Law professedly in Baptism. And, *We*, saith Saint Paul again, *are buried with Christ through Baptism unto death*; that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so also we should walk in newness of life.

IV. With these Benefits is conjoined that of being

Ephes. 2. 22, 23, 24. Colos. 3. 10. 2 Cor. 5. 17.
 Ezek. 16. 4. Tit. 3. 5. Joh. 3. 5. Gal. 3. 26. Rom.
 6. 4. Col. 2. 12.

inserted

inserted into God's Church, his family, the number of his chosen people, the mystical body of Christ, whereby we become entitled to the privileges and immunities of that heavenly Corporation. *We*, saith Saint Paul, *have been all baptized in one spirit into one body*, the mystical body of Christ: And, *so many of you*, saith he again, *as have been baptized into Christ*, (into Christ mystical, or the Church) *have put on Christ*, and ye are, adds he, *all one in Christ Jesus*. As Profelytes among the Jews by Baptism were admitted unto the Communion and privileges of the Jewish; so thereby are we received into the like Communion and privileges of the Christian, far more excellent, Society.

V. In consequence of these things, there is with Baptism conferred a capacity of, a title unto, an assurance (under condition of persevering in faith and obedience to our Lord) of eternal life and salvation. We are therein, in Saint Peter's words, *regenerated unto a lively hope of an incorruptible inheritance, by that resurrection of Christ*, which is represented to us in this action; and so therein applied, as to beget in us a title and a hope to rise again in like manner to a blissful life; whence we are said therein to rise with him: *Being*, saith Saint Paul, *buried with him in Baptism, wherein also we were raised again*: whence by the two great Apostles, Baptism is said to save us: *Baptism*, saith Saint Peter, the antitype of the delivery in the flood, *doth save us*; that is, admitteth us into the Ark, putteth us into the sure way of Salvation; and, *God*, saith Saint Paul, *according to his mercy saved us, by the Laver of Regeneration*; and, *He that shall believe, and shall be baptized, shall be saved*, is our Saviour's own word

1 Cor. 12, 13. Gal. 3. 27. 1 Pet. 1. 2. Colof. 2. 12.
1 Pet. 3. 21. Tit. 3. 5. Matth. 16, 16.

and

and promise: *Shall be saved*, that is, shall be put into a state and way of salvation, continuing in which state, proceeding in which way he assuredly *shall be saved*: For Faith there denoteth perseverance in Faith, and Baptism implieth performance of the conditions therein undertaken; which next is to be considered.

For as this Holy Rite signifieth and sealeth God's collation of so many great Benefits on us; so it also implieth and on our part ratifieth our Obligation, then in an especial manner commencing, to several most important duties toward him. It implieth, that we are in mind fully persuaded concerning the truth of that Doctrine, which God the Father revealed by his blessed Son, and confirmed by the miraculous operation of the Holy Ghost; we therein profess our humble and thankful embracing the overtures of Mercy and Grace, purchased for us by our Saviour's meritorious undertaking and performances, the which are then exhibited and tendered to us; we therein declare our hearty resolution to forsake all wicked courses of life, repugnant to the Doctrine and Law of Christ; fully to conform our lives to his Will, living thereafter in all piety, righteousness and sobriety, as loyal Subjects, faithful Servants, and dutiful children to God; in brief, we therein are bound, renouncing all erroneous principles, all vicious inclinations, and all other engagements whatever, entirely to devote ourselves to the Faith and Obedience of God the Father, our glorious and good Maker; of God the Son our gracious Redeemer; of God the Holy Ghost our blessed Guide, Assistant, Advocate, and Comforter: These are the duties antecedent unto and concomitant of our Baptism (immediately and formally required of those, who are capable of performing them, mediately and
virtually

virtually of them who are not) the which are signified by our being baptized in the Name of the Holy Trinity.

These Duties the Scripture commonly expresseth by the words, Faith and Repentance; sometimes singly, sometimes conjunctly. *If*, said Philip to the Eunuch, *thou believest with thy heart it is lawful for thee to be baptized*, Faith was an indispensable condition pre-requisite thereto; and, *Repent*, saith Saint Peter, *and let every one of you be baptized*. Repentance also was necessary to precede it; indeed, both these, as they are meant in this case, do in effect signify the same; each importeth a being renewed in mind, in judgment, in will, in affection; a serious embracing of Christ's Doctrine, and a stedfast resolution to adhere thereto in practice. Hence are those effects or consequences attributed to Faith, justifying us, reconciling and bringing us near to God, saving us; because it is the necessary condition required by God, and by him accepted, that we may be capable of these benefits conferred in Baptism; the same being also referred to that repentance or change of mind, which must accompany our entrance into Christianity; that good Conscience with which we stipulate a perpetual devotion and obedience to God, the which therefore doth, as Saint Peter telleth us, *save us*; it contributing to our Salvation, as a duty necessarily required in order thereto. This is that death to sin, and resurrection to righteousness, that being buried with Christ, and rising again with him, so as to walk in newness of

Acts 8. 37. Acts 2. 38. Acts 26. 14. 5. 31. & 20. 21. & 26. 20. & 3. 19. & 17. 30. Rom. 5. 1, 2. & 3. 25. & 2. 4. Gal. 2. 16, & 3. 8. Heb. 10. 39. Ephes. 2. 8. & 3. 12. 2 Theff. 2. 13. 2 Tim. 2. 25. 2 Pet. 3. 9. Matth. 9. 13. Luke 24. 47. Mark 2. 17. 1 Pet. 3. 21. Rom. 6. 3, 4, &c.

life,

life, which the baptismal action signifies, and which we then really undertake to perform.

And as such are the duties preceding or accompanying Baptism; so making good the engagements they contain, constantly persisting in them, maintaining and improving them, are duties necessarily consequent thereupon. *Having, saith the Apostle, had our bodies washed with pure water, let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.* We should indeed continually remember, frequently and seriously consider, what in so solemn a manner we (upon so valuable considerations) did then undertake, promise and vow to God, diligently striving to perform it; for violating our part of the Covenant and stipulation then made, by apostacy in profession or practice from God and goodness, we certainly must forfeit those inestimable benefits, which God otherwise hath tied himself to bestow; the pardon of our sins, the favour of God, the being members of Christ, the grace, guidance, assistance and comfort of the Holy Spirit; the right unto and hope of Salvation. We so doing, shall not only simply disobey and offend God; but add the highest breach of fidelity to our disobedience, together with the most heinous ingratitude, abusing the greatest grace that could be vouchsafed for us. *If we wilfully sin, after we have taken the acknowledgment of the truth, saith the Apostle, (meaning that solemn profession of our Faith in Baptism) we trample under foot the Son of God; we profane the blood of the Covenant; we do despite unto the Spirit of Grace; and incurring so deep guilt, we must expect suitable punishment.* But I proceed to the other Sacrament.

Heb. 10. 23. 2 Pet. 3. 17. Heb. 10. 26.

T H E

E U C H A R I S T.

AMONG the wonderful works of Power and Grace performed by God Almighty, in favour of the Children of Israel, and in order to their delivery from the Egyptian slavery, a most signal one, was the smiting the first-born in every house of the Egyptians, and passing over the houses of the Children of Israel; wherein God declared his just wrath against their cruel Oppressors, depriving them in a sudden and dreadful manner of what was nearest and dearest to them; and his gracious mercy toward them, in preserving what was alike dear to them from so woeful a calamity; thus, as the Text expresseth it, putting a difference between the Egyptians and the Children of Israel. Now that the memory of so remarkable a Mercy might be preserved, that their affections might be raised to a strong Sense of God's goodness, and their Faith in them confirmed, so as in the like need to hope for the same favourable help and protection, by the consideration of so notable an experiment, it pleased God to appoint a Sacrament, or mysterious Rite to be annually celebrated, representing and recalling to mind, that act of God wherein his special kindness was so eminently demonstrated toward his People: The same also (as did other Rites and Sacrifices, instituted by God among that people) looking directly forward upon that other great delivery from

Cypr. Ep. 63.

Sin

Sin and Hell, which God in mercy designed toward mankind, to be atchieved by our Saviour; prefiguring, that the Souls of them who should be willing to forsake the spiritual bondage of sin, should be saved from the ruin coming upon them who would abide therein; God regarding the blood of our Saviour (that immaculate Lamb, sacrificed for them) sprinkled upon the doors of their houses, that is, by hearty Faith and Repentance, applied to their Consciences. The occasion of celebrating which Holy Rite, our Saviour we see did improve to the institution of this Sacrament, most agreeing therewith in design, as representative and commemorative of the greatest blessing and mercy that we are capable of having vouchsafed to us; some part of that ancient Rite or Sacrifice, which was most suitable to the special purposes of this Institution, and most conformable to the general constitution of the Christian Religion, whereby all bloody Sacrifices are abolished, being retained in this.

The Action itself, or rather the whole Rite, consisting of divers actions, we see plainly described in the Gospels, and in the first Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians; distinguishable into these chief parts. 1. The Benediction and Consecration, by Prayer and Thanksgiving, of Bread and Wine. 2. The breaking of Bread, and handling the Cup. 3. The delivery and distribution of them to the persons present. 4. The declaration accompanying that delivery, that those symbolical things and actions did represent our Saviour's Body given and broken, our Saviour's Blood shed and poured out for us, in sanction of the New Covenant. 5. The actual partaking of those Symbols, by eating the

Exod. 12. 23. Heb. 10. 22. 1 Pet. 1. 2. 1 Tim. 4. 5.
 Luke 22. 19, 20. 1 Cor. 11. 24, 25.

Bread, and drinking the Wine, done by all present. These things we find done at the first institution and exemplary practice of this holy Ceremony; the which our Saviour obliged us to imitate, saying, *Do this in remembrance of me.* There followeth in Saint Matthew and Saint Mark, presently after the narration concerning these particulars, — *And having sung a hymn, they went to the mount of Olives:* Which action was indeed in itself proper to conclude the practice of this holy Rite, yet what reference it hath thereto, cannot thence be determined; however, with these the Church hath always joined several acts of Devotion, Confessions, Prayers, Praises, Thanksgivings, Intercessions, Vows, suitable to the nature and design of the Sacrament, apt to glorify God, and edify the faithful in the celebration thereof.

Such is the practice itself instituted and enjoined by our Saviour; the mysterious importance thereof, as we find it explained in the holy Scripture, (the only solid and sure ground upon which we can build the explication of supernatural Mysteries) consisteth chiefly in these particulars:

I. It was intended for a commemorative representation of our Saviour's Passion for us; fit to mind us of it, to move us to consider it, to beget affections in us, suitable to the memory and consideration thereof. *Do this,* saith our Lord, *for my remembrance,* or in commemoration of me; that is, so as thereby to have raised in you a reflection of mind and heart upon those grievous pains, which I shall have endured for your sake, to procure for you a remission of sins, and reconciliation to God. And, *So often,* saith Saint Paul, *as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, Ye tell forth* (or significantly express) *the*

Luke 22. 17. Mark 14. 23. Matth. 26. 30. Mark 14. 26. Luke 22. 19. 1 Cor. 11. 25. 1 Cor. 11. 26.

death

death of our Lord till he come, or during his absence from us. The suffering of our Saviour (the most wonderful act of goodness and charity, that ever was performed in the world, which produced effects of highest consequence to our benefit, the consideration whereof is apt to work the best dispositions of piety in us) should very frequently be present to our thoughts and affections; and that it may be so with advantage, such a solemn and sensible representation thereof is very conducive; wherein we behold him crucified, as it were *in effigie*, his body broken, his blood poured out for us; it being in a sort a putting us into the circumstances of those, who did behold our Saviour for us hanging upon the Cross. Our Lord being absent in body from us, (sitting in Heaven at God's right hand) to supply that absence, that we should not be apt to forget him, and thereby become wholly estranged from him, is pleased to order this occasion of being present, and conversing with us, in such a manner, as may retain in our memories his gracious performances for us; may impress in our hearts a kindly sense of them; may raise us up in mind and affection to him.

II. The benefits consequent upon our Saviour's Passion, rightly apprehended, heartily believed, seriously considered by us, are hereby lively represented, and effectually conveyed; to the sustenance and nourishment of our spiritual life, to the refreshment and comfort of our souls. It is a holy Feast, a spiritual Repast, a divine Entertainment, to which God in kindness invites us; to which if we come with well-disposed minds, he there feeds us with most holy and delicious Viands, with heavenly Manna, with most reviving and cherishing Liquor. Bread is the staff of life, the most
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common,

common, most necessary, and most wholesome, and most savory Meat; Wine is the most pleasant and wholesome also, the most sprightly and cordial Drink; by them therefore our Lord chose to represent that body and blood, by the oblation of which a capacity of life and health was procured to mankind; the taking in which by right apprehension, tasting it by hearty faith, digesting it by careful attention and meditation, converting it into our substance by devout, grateful, and holy affections, joined with serious and steady resolutions of living answerable thereto, will certainly support and maintain our spiritual life in a vigorous health and happy growth of grace; refreshing our hearts with comfort and satisfaction unspeakable: *He that doeth thus, eats our Saviour's flesh, and drinks his blood,* (that is, who, as our Saviour interpreteth it, *doth believe in him*; that belief importing all other acts of mind and will, connected with right persuasions concerning him) *bath eternal life, and shall live for ever*, as himself declares and promises; which benefits therefore in the due performance of this holy duty, are conveyed unto us.

III. This Sacrament declares that union, which good Christians partaking thereof have with Christ; their mystical insertion into him, by a close dependence upon him for spiritual life, mercy, grace and salvation; a constant adherence to him by faith and obedience, a near conformity to him in mind and affection; an inseparable conjunction with him, by the strictest bands of fidelity, and by the most endearing relations: Which things could not more fitly be set out, than by the partaking our best and most necessary food; which being taken in, soon becomes united to us, assimilated and converted

John 6. 51, 47. & 5. 36. John 15. 4.

into

into our substance, thereby renewing our strength, and repairing the decays of our nature. Wherefore, *He*, saith our Saviour, *that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him*; and, *The cup of blessing*, saith Saint Paul, *which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?* We in the outward action, partake of the Symbols representing our Saviour's Body and Blood; We in the spiritual intention, communicate of his very Person, being, according to the manner insinuated, intimately united to him.

IV. By this Sacrament consequently is signified and sealed that union, which is among our Saviour's true Disciples communicating therein; their being together united in consent of mind, and unity of faith; in mutual good-will and affection, in hope and tendency to the same blessed end, in spiritual brotherhood and society; especially upon account of their communion with Christ, which most closely ties them one to another; they partaking of this one individual food, become translated, as it were into one body and substance: *Seeing*, saith Saint Paul, *we being many, are one bread, one body; for all of us do partake of one bread.*

In the representing, producing and promoting these things, we are taught the mystery of this Sacrament doth consist: it was designed as a proper and efficacious instrument, to raise in us pious affections toward our good God and gracious Redeemer; to dispose us to all holy practice; to confirm our faith, to nourish our hope, to quicken our resolutions of walking carefully in the ways of duty; to unite us more fastly to our Saviour, and

John 6. 56. 1 Cor. 10. 16. Vide Cyp. Ep. 63. p. 146.
Ep. 67. p. 208. 1 Cor. 10. 17.

to combine us in charity one toward another ; the accomplishing of which intents thereof, doth suppose our faithful and diligent concurrence in the use thereof ; whence arise many duties incumbent upon us in respect thereto, some antecedent, some concomitant, some consequent to the use thereof.

I. Before we address ourselves to the partaking of this venerable mystery, we should consider whether we are going, what is the nature and importance of the action we set ourselves about ; that we are approaching *to our Lord's Table*, (so Saint Paul calleth it) to come into his more especial presence, to be entertained by him with the dearest welcome, and the best cheer that can be ; to receive the fullest testimonies of his mercy, and the surest pledges of his favour toward us ; that we are going to behold our Lord in tenderest love, offering up himself a Sacrifice to God, therein undergoing the sorest pains, and foulest disgraces for our good and salvation ; that we ought therefore to bring with us dispositions of soul, suitable to such an access unto, such an intercourse with our gracious Lord. Had we the honour and favour to be invited to the Table of a great Prince, what especial care should we have to dress our bodies in a clean and decent garb, to compose our minds in order to expression of all due respect to him ; to bring nothing about us noisome or ugly, that might offend his sight, or displease his mind : The like surely, and greater care we should apply, when we thus being called, do go into God's presence and communion. We should, in preparation thereto, with all our power, endeavour to cleanse our souls from all impurity of thought and desire ; from all iniquity and perverse-

1 Cor. 10. 21. ness ;

nels; from all malice, envy, hatred, anger, and all such evil dispositions, which are most offensive to God's all-piercing sight, and unbecoming his glorious presence; we should dress our souls with all those comely ornaments of grace (with purity, humility, meekness and charity) which will render us acceptable and well-pleasing to him: We should compose our minds into a frame of reverence and awful regard to the majesty of God, into a lowly, calm, and tender disposition of heart, apt to express all respect due to his presence, fit to admit the gracious insapses of his holy Spirit; very susceptible of all holy and heavenly affections, which are suitable to such a communion, or may spring from it. We should therefore remove and abandon from us, not only all vicious inclinations, and evil purposes; but even all worldly cares, desires and passions which may distract or discompose us, that may dull or deject us, that may cause us to behave ourselves indecently or unworthily before God, that may bereave us of the excellent fruits from so blessed an entertainment.

To these purposes we should, according to Saint Paul's advice, examine and approve ourselves; considering our past actions, and our present inclinations, and accordingly, by serious meditation, and fervent prayer to God for his gracious assistance therein, working our souls into a hearty remorse for our past miscarriages, and a sincere resolution to amend for the future; forsaking all sin, endeavouring in all our actions to serve and please God; purging out, as Saint Paul again injoineth us, *the old leaven of vice and wickedness*; so that we may feast, and celebrate this Passover, in which Christ is mystically sacrificed for us, in the *unleavened dis-*

1 Cor. 11. 28.

1 Cor. 5. 7.

positions

positions of *sincerity and truth*. Such are the duties previous to our partaking this Sacrament.

II. Those duties which accompany it, are a reverent and devout affection of heart, with a suitable behaviour therein; an awful sense of mind befitting the Majesty of that Presence wherein we do appear, answerable to the greatness, and goodness, and holiness of him, with whom we converse; becoming the sacredness of those Mysteries which are exhibited to us, (that which Saint Paul calleth, to *discern* or distinguish *our Lord's body*; that is, yielding a peculiar reverence of mind and behaviour in regard thereto) a devotion of heart, consisting in hearty contrition for our sins, which did expose our Saviour to the enduring such pains, then remembered; in firm resolution to forsake the like thereafter, as injurious, dishonourable and displeasing to him; in fervent love of him, as full of so wonderful goodness and charity toward us; in most hearty thankfulness for those unconceivably great expressions of kindness toward us; in deepest humility, upon sense of our unworthiness, to receive such testimonies of grace and favour from him, (our unworthiness *to eat the crumbs that fall from his table*, how much more to be admitted into such degrees of honourable communion and familiarity, of close conjunction and union with him?) of pious joy in consideration of the excellent privileges herein imparted, and of the blessed fruits accruing to us from his gracious performances; in a comfortable hope of obtaining and enjoying the benefits of his obedience and passion, by the assistance of his Grace; in steady faith, and full persuasion of mind, that he is, supposing our dutiful compliance, ready to

1 Cor. 11. 29.

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bestow upon us all the blessings then exhibited; in attentively fixing the eyes of our mind, and all the powers of our soul, our understanding, will, memory, fancy, affection upon him; as willingly pouring forth his life for our salvation. Lastly, in motions of enlarged good-will and charity toward all our brethren for his sake, in obedience to his will, and in imitation of him; such like duties should attend our participation of this holy Sacrament.

III. The effects of having duly performed which, should appear in the practice of those duties, which are consequent thereon, being such as these: An increase of all pious inclinations and affections, expressing themselves in a real amendment of our lives, and producing more goodly fruits of obedience; the thorough digestion of that spiritual nourishment by our becoming more fastly knit to our Saviour by higher degrees of faith and love; the maintaining a more lively sense of his superabundant goodness; the cherishing those influences of grace, which descend upon our hearts in this communion, and improving them to nearer degrees of perfection in all piety and virtue; a watchful care and endeavour in our lives to approve ourselves in some measure worthy of that great honour and favour, which God hath vouchsafed us in admitting us to so near approaches to himself; an earnest pursuance of the resolutions, performance of the vows, making good the engagements, which in so solemn a manner, upon so great an occasion we made, and offered up unto our God and Saviour; finally, the considering, that by the breach of such resolutions, by the violation of such engagements, our sins receiving so mighty aggravation of vain inconstancy and wicked perfidiousness, our guilt will hugely be increased;
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our souls relapsing into so grievous distemper, our spiritual strength will be exceedingly impaired; consequently hence our true comforts will be abated, our best hopes will be shaken, our eternal state will be desperately endangered.

There is one duty which I should not forbear to touch, concerning this Sacrament; that is, our gladly embracing any opportunity presented of communicating therein; the doing so, being not only our duty, but a great aid and instrument of piety; the neglecting it a grievous sin, and productive of great mischiefs to us.

The Primitive Christians did very frequently use it, partaking therein, as it seems at every time of their meeting for God's service. It is said of them by Saint Luke, *That they continued stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine and communion, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers; and, when you meet together, it is not* (as according to the intent and duty of meeting it should be) *to eat the Lord's Supper*, saith Saint Paul. And Justin Martyr in his second Apology, describing the religious Service of God in their Assemblies, mentioneth it as a constant part thereof; and Epiphanius reporteth it as a custom in the Church, derived from Apostolical Institution, to celebrate the *Eucharist* thrice every week, that is, so often as they did meet to pray and praise God; which practice may well be conceived a great means of kindling and preserving in them that holy fervour of piety, which they so illustriously expressed in their conversation, and in their glad-some suffering for Christ's sake; and the remitting of that frequency, as it is certainly a sign and an effect, so in part it may possibly be reckoned a cause of the degeneracy of Christian practice, into that

Acts 2. 42.

1 Cor. 10. 20.

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great coldness and slackness which afterward did seize upon it, and now doth apparently keep it in a languishing and half-dying state.

The rarer occasions therefore we now have of performing this duty, (the which indeed was always esteemed the principal office of God's Service) of enjoying this benefit, (the being deprived whereof, was also deemed the greatest punishment and infelicity that could arrive to a Christian) the more ready we should be to embrace them. If we dread God's displeasure, if we value our Lord and his benefits, if we tender the life, health and welfare of our souls, we shall not neglect it; for how can we but extremely offend God by so extreme rudeness, that when he kindly invites us to his Table, we are averse from coming thither, or utterly refuse it? That when he calleth us into his presence, we run from him; that when he, with his own hand, offereth us inestimable mercies and blessings, we reject them? It is not only the breach of God's command, who enjoined us to *do this*, but a direct contempt of his favour and goodness, most clearly and largely exhibited in this office. And how can we bear any regard to our Lord, or be any wise sensible of his gracious performances in our behalf, if we are unwilling to join in thankful and joyful commemoration of them? How little do we love our own souls, if we suffer them to pine and starve for want of that Food, which God here dispenseth for their sustenance and comfort? If we bereave them of enjoying so high a privilege, so inestimable a benefit, so incomparable pleasures as are to be found and felt in this service, or do spring and flow from it? What reasonable excuse can we frame for such neglect? Are we otherwise employed? What business can there be more important, than serving God,

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and saving our own souls? Is it wisdom, in pursuance of any the greatest affair here, to disregard the principal concern of our Souls? Do we think ourselves unfit and unworthy to appear in God's presence? But is any man unworthy to obey God's commands? Is any man unfit to implore and partake of God's mercy, if he be not unwilling to do it? What unworthiness should hinder us from remembering our Lord's excessive charity towards us, and thanking him for it? From praying for his grace; from resolving to amend our lives? Must we, because we are unworthy, continue so still, by shunning the means of correcting and curing us? Must we encrease our unworthiness, by transgressing our duty? If we esteem things well, the conscience of our sinfulness should rather drive us to it, as to our medicine, than detain us from it. There is no man indeed who must not conceive and confess himself unworthy; therefore, must no man come thither at God's call? If we have a sense of our sins, and a mind to leave them; if we have a sense of God's goodness, and a heart to thank him for it, we are so worthy, that we shall be kindly received there, and graciously rewarded. If we will not take a little care to work these dispositions in us, we are indeed unworthy; but the being so, from our own perverse negligence, is a bad excuse for the neglect of our duty. In fine, I dare say, that he, who with an honest meaning, although with an imperfect devotion, doth address himself to the performance of his duty, is far more excusable, than he that upon whatever score declineth it; no scrupulous shiness can ward us from blame; what then shall we say, if supine sloth, or profane contempt, are the causes of such neglect?

Thus

Thus having briefly dispatched the considerations that offered themselves upon these Subjects, I shall conclude all with prayer to Almighty God, that we by his grace and help, believing rightly, strongly, constantly and finally; being frequent and fervent in prayer, and all pious devotion, sincerely obeying all God's Commandments; continuing orderly, dutiful and worthy members of Christ's Church, growing continually in grace, by the worthy participation of the Holy Sacraments, may obtain the end of our faith, the success of our prayers, the reward of our obedience, the continuance in that holy Society, the perfect consummation of grace in the possession of eternal joy, glory, and bliss; which God in his infinite mercy grant to us, for our blessed Saviour's sake, to whom be all glory and praise for ever and ever. *Amen.*

THE END.

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